

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-12 IO-14 ISO-00 CA-01 VO-03
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PA-02 /060 W
-----012376 140559Z /10

R 131010Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7574
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
INS/CO WASHDC
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF
SUBJ: BOAT REFUGEES ARRIVAL RATES IN MALAYSIA AND THAILAND

1. SUMMARY: THE RECORD NUMBER OF BOAT REFUGEE
ARRIVALS IN MALAYSIA DURING APRIL AND IN THAILAND
DURING MAY RAISED THE SPECTRE THAT THOSE RATES
MIGHT CONTINUE THROUGH THE REST OF 1978. HISTORICAL
PRECEDENT INDICATES OTHERWISE. ANALYZING ARRIVAL
FIGURES BY MONTH INDICATES THAT WEATHER PLAYS A
SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN SUCCESSFUL ESCAPES BY BOATS
FROM VIETNAM. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING MAY, THE SOUTHWEST NONSOON ADVANCES
ACROSS THE MALAY PENINSULA, THAILAND, AND INDOCHINA.
THE MONSOON REACHES ITS PEAK STRENGTH IN JULY, WHEN THE
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EASTERLY WINDS OVER THE SOUTH CHINA SEA ATTAIN SPEEDS
OF AS MUCH AS 30 KNOTS. DURING AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER
WIND FORCE AND CONSTANCY SLACKEN. BY OCTOBER THE
NORTHEAST MONSOON IS DEVELOPING IN THE NORTHERN
REACHES OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA. ITS MAIN REINFALL
EFFECT IN INDOCHINA IS ON NORTH AND CENTRAL VIETNAM,
BUT BY JANUARY WINDS ARE VIRTUALLY ALL OVER EQUATORIAL

SOUTHEAST ASIA. THE FOLLOWING MONTHS SEE A GRADUAL REDUCTION OF THE NORTH EASTERLIES, ACCOMPANIED BY A

DECREASE IN THEIR STRENGTH AND CONSTANCY. FINALLY, IN APRIL, THE CYCLE BEGINS ANEW. THE SOUTH CHINA SEA IS RELATIVELY TRANQUIL OCTOBER AND APRIL.

3. WE HAVE DRAWN ON UNHCR FIGURES TO COMPILE THE BOAT ARRIVAL STATISTICS FOR THE 18 MONTHS FROM JANUARY 1977 THROUGH JUNE 1978. ALTHOUGH UNHCR FIGURES ARE AS SUBJECT TO ERROR AS ANY OTHER STATISTICS, THE ARE AT LEAST RECOGNIZED ONES AND STAND IN THE RECORD. JANUARY, JULY, AND AUGUST WERE THE LOW MONTHS DURING 1977 IN THAILAND. JANUARY, APRIL, AND AUGUST WERE THE LOW MONTHS IN MALAYSIA. (ONE SUSPECTS THAT SOME OF THE APRIL 1977 ARRIVALS MAY HAVE BEEN COUNTED UP LATE, AND PLACED IN THE MAY TOTAL. THE APRIL 1978 ARRIVALS IN MALAYSIA WERE AN ALL-TIME RECORD ANYWHERE). THE PEAK MONTHS IN 1977 WERE OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER FOR BOTH COUNTRIES, FOLLOWED BY MAY FOR THAILAND AND SEPTEMBER FOR MALAYSIA.

4. ARRIVALS IN BOTH COUNTRIES ACCELERATED DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 1978, BUT MUCH MORE SHARPLY IN MALAYSIA THAN THAILAND. APRIL, MAY, AND JUNE WERE EXTREMELY HIGH IN MALAYSIA; MAY AND APRIL IN UNCLASSIFIED

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THAILAND. (WE KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT THE UNHCR PLACED SOME LATE APRIL ARRIVALS IN THE MAY TOTAL, SO THE ARRIVAL FIGURES FOR THOSE MONTHS WERE ROUGHLY EQUAL). FACTORS OTHER THAN WEATHER ACCOUNTED THE THE ACCELERATION, BUT THE WEATHER INFLUENCED THE RELATIVE TOTALS AMONG MONTHS.

5. FOLLOWING ARE UNHCR STATISTICS ON BOAT REFUGEE ARRIVALS FROM JANUARY 1977 THROUGH JUNE 1978.

	MALAYSIA	THAILAND
JAN 77	50	61
FEB	238	301
MAR	245	322
APR	64	387
MAY	773	468
JUN	731	371
SIX MONTH AVERAGE		
ARRIVAL RATE	350/MONTH	318/MONTH

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JUL 77	466	190
AUG	282	217
SEP	867	407
OCT	1271	858
NOV	875	495
DEC	326	459
SIX MONTH AVERAGE		
ARRIVAL RATE	681/MONTH	438/MONTH
TWELVE MONTH AVERAGE		
ARRIVAL RATE	515/MONTH	378/MONTH
JAN 78	1361	377
FEB	947	441
MAR	1553	373
APR	3537	784
MAY	3286	933
JUN	2651	379

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SIX MONTH AVERAGE
ARRIVAL RATE 2222/MONTH 548/MONTH

EIGHTEEN MONTH AVERAGE

ARRIVAL RATE 1085/MONTH 435/MONTH

TOTAL ARRIVALS SINCE

JANUARY 1977 19.523 7823

6. INCOMPLETE INDICATIONS SO FAR IN JULY REVEAL
A SHARP DROP IN ARRIVALS. BASED ON PAST EXAMPLE,
WE CAN ALSO EXPECT LOW ARRIVALS IN AUGUST, AN
INCREASE IN SEPTEMBER, AND THE NEXT SURGE IN
OCTOBER.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, SEA RESCUES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BANGKO19833
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780288-0704
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780766/aaaacdon.tel
Line Count: 181
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 79c47e76-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION HA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2027184
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BOAT REFUGEES ARRIVAL RATES IN MALAYSIA AND THAILAND
TAGS: SREF, VM, TH
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/79c47e76-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014